

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT NO. 158000

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COUNTRY Colombia

CONFIDENTIAL

DATE DISTR. 18 February 1948

SUBJECT Proposed Formation of New Workers Federation in
Opposition to CTC

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SUPPLEMENT TO
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1. On 23 January 1948 the Communist leaders of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Colombia (CTC) met to discuss steps to be taken in the event that the Union de Trabajadores de Colombia (UTC) is successful in gaining legal recognition by the Government and dual syndicates come into existence in Colombia.
2. It was revealed at this meeting that Justiniano Espinosa, the Secretary-General of the UTC, had just returned from the Inter-American Labor Conference recently held in Lima, Peru, with a definite program for the establishment of a new legal labor confederation in Colombia. This new confederation would be established within the framework of the AFL, and it would avoid any political agitation in labor and peasant organizations.
3. It was reported that Espinosa had personally delivered to President Mariano Ospina Perez a copy of a proposition, unanimously approved at Lima, requesting that the Colombia government grant legal status to the UTC. Toward this end a national syndical congress was to be convoked for 5-8 February 1948 in Bogota. All labor syndicates not affiliated with the CTC, and without determined political attachments, were to be invited to attend.
4. Pedro J. Abella, Secretary-General of the CTC, stated that he personally knows that the President is inclined toward the creation of a new non-political labor and peasant organization, and that Delio Jaramillo Arbalaz, the Minister of Labor, is working on a plan to bring this new organization into being.
5. Foreseeing the possibility of the UTC's legalization and the subsequent blow to the prestige of the CTC, the Colombian representative of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina (CTAL), Napoleon Molina, allegedly has already gone to Mexico City to confer with the Executive Committee of the CTAL and to receive instructions to be followed in the event the legalization of the UTC becomes a reality. Molina believes that the CTC could expect financial help from the CTAL and also from the CIO in the United States.
6. The source also learned that Jose Antonio Montalvo, Minister of Government, has confided to close friends that, in view of the attitude taken by the CTC in the current petroleum workers' strike, and the fact that the CTC directorate is Communist dominated, high government officials are giving serious thought to authorizing the formation of the new proposed confederation of workers.

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